

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 51

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 114

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 51—Relative to California Bullying Prevention Day.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 10, 2013.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 51, Lieu. California Bullying Prevention Day.

This measure would declare December 12, 2013, as California Bullying Prevention Day, and would recognize the need for individuals, schools, communities, businesses, local governments, and the state to take action on behalf of bullying prevention in California.

WHEREAS, Bullying, a form of violence among children and youth, is common on school playgrounds, in neighborhoods, and in homes throughout California; and

WHEREAS, Bullying behaviors are recognized as dangerous and harmful acts that victimize the targeted child and bystanders. Bullying is a pattern of deliberate, negative, hurtful, aggressive acts that works to shift the balance of physical, emotional, or social power; and

WHEREAS, Bullying may take many forms, such as physical, verbal, and relational or social. Physical bullying and verbal bullying are usually considered to be a direct form, while relational bullying refers to an indirect form of bullying, such as social exclusion and spreading rumors; and

WHEREAS, As computers and cell phones are rapidly becoming popular for adolescents, cyberbullying, or electronic bullying, is emerging as a new form of bullying. Cyberbullying can be defined as a form of aggression that occurs through personal computers or cell phones; and

WHEREAS, The prevalence of bullying among children and youth is staggering, with studies nationally suggesting that 28 percent of students were bullied at school and 6 percent were cyberbullied; and

WHEREAS, School bullying has been identified as a problematic behavior among adolescents, affecting school achievement, prosocial skills, and psychological well-being for both victims and perpetrators; and

WHEREAS, Children and youth who are bullied are more likely than other children to be depressed, lonely, or anxious; to have low self-esteem; to experience headaches, stomachaches, tiredness, and poor eating; to be absent from school, dislike school, and have poor school performance; and to think about suicide or try to commit suicide; and

WHEREAS, Bullying can affect the social environment of a school, creating a climate of fear among students, inhibiting their ability to learn, and leading to other antisocial behavior; and

WHEREAS, If students are in fear for their own safety, they are unable to concentrate on learning. An estimated 160,000 students stay home from school every day due to bullying, thereby impacting student achievement; and

WHEREAS, Bullying has long-term ramifications for public safety. A bully is six times more likely than a person who is not a bully to be incarcerated by the age of 24; and

WHEREAS, Bullying is a cyclical problem and will not end without intervention. Two-thirds of students who are targets become bullies themselves; and

WHEREAS, Prevention of bullying requires coordination and understanding. Twenty-five percent of students say that teachers intervened in bullying incidents, while 71 percent of teachers say they have intervened; and

WHEREAS, When collaboration occurs, the impact is tremendous. In schools where there are bullying prevention programs, bullying has been reduced by 50 percent; and

WHEREAS, The most effective model is a comprehensive program using a combination of interventions schoolwide, at the classroom level, and at the individual level to create a social environment characterized by positive adult involvement, firm limits for unacceptable behavior, consistent use of sanctions for rule violations, and recognition that adults are the authorities; and

WHEREAS, Restorative justice may be the most appropriate way to prevent bullying. The aim of restorative justice is to reintegrate those affected by wrongdoing back into the community as resilient and responsible members. Restorative justice is a form of conflict resolution that aims to make it clear to the offender that his or her offending behavior is not condoned, while at the same time being supportive and respectful of the individual; and

WHEREAS, Current trends in prevention use programs that are designed for middle to high school students. However, new research shows that most bullying starts in elementary school, specifically in grades 2 to 5, inclusive, and therefore, intervention should start earlier; and

WHEREAS, Writer, actor, director, and producer Gerry Orz was nine years of age when he created a film called “Day of Silence.” The film targets elementary and middle school students and truthfully depicts the life of a youth who is emotionally and physically bullied by a peer; and

WHEREAS, Gerry’s compelling story mixes fiction and reality to demonstrate how bullying impacts a youth’s schoolwork, family, and well-being. He shares strategies for students, parents, and schools that can protect children from being bullied; and

WHEREAS, Gerry decided to produce the video after being bullied at school. He wanted to speak out and encourage others to do the same in order to break the silence; and

WHEREAS, Gerry has turned an awful experience into a story that will prevent bullying and be a source of hope for victims. In addition to his film,

Gerry has started a campaign to organize a global day of silence on December 12, 2013, in an effort to raise awareness about bullying. Gerry suggested other means of supporting Bullying Prevention Day for those supporters who are unable to stay silent on December 12, 2013; and

WHEREAS, Providing a safe school environment for children and youth is a family, community, state, and national priority; and

WHEREAS, The future well-being of our state depends on the value we place on our children and youth and, in particular, on our actions to provide our young people with opportunities to acquire knowledge and develop into healthy and productive adults; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature declares December 12, 2013, as California Bullying Prevention Day, and recognizes the need for all of us as individuals, schools, communities, businesses, local governments, and the state to take action on behalf of bullying prevention in California; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.